

RACHEL HEALOW

a) What was your V & E background before attending VENIT?

Before attending the VENIT program I had no educational background in viticulture or enology but had worked my way up through the wine industry, from first working harvest jobs in wineries around the world, finally to positions as enologist and assistant winemaker. I had laboratory experience and understood the practical steps and procedures of winemaking, but not the in-depth scientific mechanisms behind fermentation. Speaking to viticulture, I had spent some time in vineyards, but only in very rudimentary tasks such as maturity sampling. I had only a very basic understanding of plant biology.

b) What was your occupation before attending VENIT?

As I outlined above, before the VENIT program I spent 7 years working in wine production, always in the cellar, and most recently as assistant winemaker in a small, low-tech niche winery.

c) What is your current occupation?

I work on the technical viticulture team for a vineyard management company that manages many diverse vineyards over several thousand acres in Napa and Sonoma.

d) How much did VENIT contributed to such a change?

VENIT helped to build virtually my entire understanding of the field of viticulture. As a direct result, I've shifted my career focus from winery to vineyard. Although I am constantly confronted with new situations in this new role, I find myself engaged but not intimidated or overwhelmed by the everyday challenges of vineyard management. Before VENIT I was neither qualified nor anywhere near knowledgeable enough to excel at my current position. I'm confident that the degree has made me much more marketable to employers in both viticultural and enological positions.

